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Office of University
Communications

January 3, 2017

Devan Vandembark ('15) Achieves Goals in Academics and Art

Visiting the campus of Gardner-Webb University as a high school senior, Devan Vandembark ('15), a native of Fairfield, Ohio, began to sense he'd found his home for the next four years. "I attended a psychology class of Dr. (David) Carscaddon's, which I really enjoyed, and I also got to tour the ceramics department," he recalled. "A student took my family and me around and showed us the studio space, and I decided GWU had professors and students that would invest in me, and it was a place where I could learn."

His instincts were correct. With the guidance of his professors, he developed his artistic talents and excelled academically as an honors student. He formed friendships while serving on the Campus Ministries United Council, a student ministry that works together with GWU's ministerial staff in prayer, discipleship, and relationship building.

"Dr. Carscaddon was my department advisor and was a huge spiritual encouragement to me throughout my time at school," Vandembark offered. "We often met and talked about God and art and how to love people truly. I always left inspired and encouraged to try harder and love people better. Doug Knotts, my pottery professor and chair of visual arts, is still a good friend of mine as is Ms. (Susan) Bell, who taught my drawing class. They both challenged me and provided me with experiences that pushed me and broadened my understanding of what art is and how it is valuable and representative of entire times and cultures. Knotts has continued to provide me with experiences and connections to potters and programs throughout North Carolina."

Devan Vandembark's pottery

One of his favorite classes was logic with Dr. Perry Hildreth, GWU Professor of Philosophy. "This class was unlike any other class I took at Gardner-Webb and it should be a requirement for every student," he assessed. "It really emphasized just making sense and being congruous. To me it is the quintessence of University. University used to mean more than some school where kids go for a diploma. University was where students went to become learned, to know how to make sense of the world and process life in a way that provided harmony among all parts. This class became useful in all of my other classes,

making me aware that my thoughts and ideas across the board from psychology to art needed to agree at their cores. If there was a class that I wish I could take again, it's this one."